

Clarke's 'Birds of the South Orkney Islands.'<sup>1</sup>—The South Orkneys, situated about 600 miles southeast of the Falkland Islands, in about latitude 60° to 61° south, comprise a group of about a dozen small islands, discovered in 1821 and subsequently visited but three times prior to their exploration in 1903 by the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, in the 'Scotia.' "So far as their Ornis is concerned," writes Mr. Clarke, "only two species of birds, and one of these problematical," had been previously alluded to. The 'Scotia' visited the islands in February, 1903, and at the end of March of the same year, after a successful voyage to the southern waters of Weddell Sea, went into winter quarters at Laurie Island, one of the only two large islands of the group. At the end of eight months she was freed from the ice on November 23, and immediately departed for the Falkland Island and Buenos Ayres to refit; but a party was left on the island, in charge of Mr. Mossman, the meteorologist, and Dr. Pirie, medical officer and geologist, to make collections throughout the summer months. To the labors of Dr. Pirie, says Mr. Clarke, "we owe most of our knowledge of bird-life of the island during this most interesting part of the year." Four species remained at the island throughout the winter, but by April all the others had departed, and the first spring movement began in October, when most of the species returned, the late comers arriving during the month of November. "During the summer bird-life was extremely abundant. Rookeries of the three species of Penguin (*Pygoscelis*) were numerous on the low rocky shores and less steep cliffs on various parts of the coast. Some of these bird-cities contained several millions of inhabitants, and their daily life presented scenes so remarkable as to be almost beyond description. . . . The Ringed Penguin, hitherto regarded as being nowhere an abundant species, was found to have its metropolis at the South Orkneys, where the summer population on Laurie Is. alone was estimated at not less than one million birds."

The eggs of the Cape Petrel were here for the first time discovered, as were also the young of the Ringed Penguin and Snowy Petrel; the known range of other species was greatly extended. The collection of nearly 150 skins included previously unknown plumages, and representatives of 16 out of the 18 species known to occur at the islands; while the eggs obtained "numbered several thousands." Mr. Clarke is fortunate in having this rich material assigned to him for elaboration, and his report thereon shows that it has fallen into competent hands. Two colored plates illustrate young plumages of the Sheathbill, Snowy Petrel, and the Ringed Penguin; the eight halftones show the rookeries and nesting habits of penguins, petrels, and other species, among them Wilson's Petrel (*Oce-*

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<sup>1</sup> Ornithological Results of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition.—II. On the Birds of the South Orkney Islands. By Wm. Eagle Clarke, F. R. S. E., F. L. S., Royal Scottish Museum. Ibis, Jan. 1906, pp. 145-187, pll. iii-xiii.

*anites oceanicus*), which "resorts in thousands to Laurie Is. to nest on the cliffs of its remarkably extensive coast-line." This species is one of the last to reach the islands in spring (Nov. 11), and one of the earliest to leave (March 23).—J. A. A.

**Menegaux and Hellmayr on the Passeres Tracheophones of the Paris Museum.**—As indicated by the title, this important series of papers<sup>1</sup> is a critical revision of the American Tracheophones contained in the Paris Museum of Natural History, with special reference to species of supposed doubtful standing, and to the actual types of species contained in the French National Museum. The specimens of this group are said to number several thousands, and apparently represent about a third of the known species, including five here described as new. About 120 species are represented by types, and a number of others by cotypes. Here are preserved the types and other material resulting from the French voyages of exploration made in the early part of the last century, as those of d'Orbigny, Castelnau, Deville, A. St.-Hilaire, etc. Much of this historic material, the basis of our knowledge of many of the species of this group, has neither been studied anew nor carefully examined, according to these authors, by any recent investigators, with the result that doubt has sometimes been expressed as to the validity of some of the species. Some of the types had been lost sight of in the mass of specimens, being without scientific names, but it has been possible to rescue and identify them "with certainty" through various clues furnished by their labels. A few types appear to have quite disappeared, but among those here catalogued and commented upon are the types of 20 species described by Lafresnaye and d'Orbigny, of 9 described by Lafresnaye, of 13 described by Des Murs, of 12 described by Vieillot, of 11 described by Lesson, of 8 described by Pucheran, and of a smaller number described by various other authors.

Of special interest to American ornithologists is a statement in reference to the collection of Baron Lafresnaye, sold after his death to the Boston Society of Natural History. This is to the effect that E. Verreaux, a natural history dealer, before placing the collection on sale, labeled and catalogued the specimens, and indicated many as types which have no right to be so considered. Upon the authority of these indications American ornithologists have assumed, with apparently good reason, that the types of various species described by Lafresnaye and d'Orbigny in their preliminary papers on d'Orbigny's collection, published in the 'Magazin de Zoologie,' were really those so indicated in the Lafresnaye Collection.

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<sup>1</sup> Etudes des espèces critiques et des types du groupe des Passereaux trachéophones de l'Amérique tropicale appartenant aux Collections du Muséum. Par MM. A. Menegaux et C.-E. Hellmayr. I. Conopophagidés, II. Hylactidés, Bull. du Mus. d'histoire naturelle [de Paris], 1905, pp. 372-381. III. Dendrocolaptidés, Mém. de la Soc. d'hist. nat. d'Autun, XIX, 1906, pp. 43-126, (also separate, *repaged*). IV. Formicariidés, Bull. de la Soc. Philomat. de Paris, 1906, pp. 24-58.